

Code of Practice for Patient Complaints

We want all our patients to be pleased with the service that they receive, so we take complaints seriously. If a patient makes a complaint, we will deal with it promptly and courteously. Our aim is to resolve the matter as quickly as possible following the agreed procedure and, wherever possible, to the satisfaction of the patient.

A complaint may indicate a failing on our part, which we can learn from and make improvements to our service. We will adopt a 'no blame' approach when investigating a complaint and especially where individuals are identified, with the aim of reaching a satisfactory conclusion. We will, at all times, be polite and respectful to our patients.

Practice procedure

1. The Practice Manager is responsible for dealing with all complaints about our service.
2. If a patient makes a complaint in person or by telephone, the member of staff receiving the complaint makes an initial record of their concerns and checks this for accuracy with the patient. The patient is given a copy of the record and the original is passed to the Practice Manager. If the Practice Manager is available, the patient is asked whether they would like to see her immediately. Otherwise the patient is advised when the Practice Manager will make contact to arrange a meeting in person or by telephone.
3. If the patient complains in writing or by email, the complaint will be passed immediately to the Practice Manager.
4. Complaints about clinical care or the amount charged for treatment will be referred to the dentist concerned, unless the patient requests otherwise.
5. All complaints are acknowledged in writing as soon as possible but within three working days. A copy of this code of practice will be sent with the acknowledgement. If the patient has not yet discussed the matter with the Practice Manager, they will be offered the opportunity to do so and also be asked how they would like to be kept informed of developments – by letter, email, telephone or face-to-face meetings. The patient will also be advised of the process we will follow in resolving the complaint and the anticipated timescale.
6. We will investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and, as far as reasonably practicable, will keep the patient informed of our progress. Investigations will normally be completed within six months.

7. On completion of our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which will include
 - an explanation of how the complaint has been considered
 - the conclusions reached in respect of each specific part of the complaint
 - details of any necessary remedial action, and
 - whether the Practice is satisfied with any action it has already taken or will be taking as a result of the complaint.
8. Proper and comprehensive records will be kept of any complaint received as well as any action taken to improve services as a consequence of a complaint.
9. If a patient is not satisfied with the result, the complaint may be referred to

The Care Quality Commission
Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TG
Telephone: 03000 616161
Email: enquiries@cqc.org
Website: www.cqc.org.uk

For complaints about private treatment, to:

- The Dental Complaints Service
The Lansdowne Building, 2 Lansdowne Road, Croydon, CR9 2ER
Telephone: 08456 120 540
Email: info@dentalcomplaints.org.uk
Website: www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk
- The General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ
Telephone: 0845 222 4141

For complaints about NHS treatment, to:

- The Complaints Team
NHS Devon, Commissioning HQ, The Annex, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QL
Email: complaints.devon@nhs.net
Telephone: 01392 207 819 or Fax (secure): 01392 207 372
- The Patient Advice and Complaints Team (PACT)
FREEPOST EX184, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QL
Telephone: PACT on 0300 13 1672 or 01392 267 665
Email: pals.devon@nhs.net or complaints.devon@nhs.net
SMS: text 07789 741 099 and ask for a call back
Website: www.devonpct.nhs.uk
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP
Telephone: 0345 015 4033
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk